

Lesson Title: Take Back Your Hope

Scripture: *“No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame...” Psalm 25:3*

Introduction

It is the beginning of the last month of the year and this is always a time of reflection. We think about what we have gained and accomplished, and what we have loss and forfeited. Over time, as the years go by, the losses and what we do not have can begin to outweigh the gains. Not reaching certain goals at 20 feels a lot different at 40. A loss at 30 feels a lot different at 60. The notion of time changes from being our friend (“time is on your side”) to becoming your enemy (“my biological clock is ticking”). And as a result, we lose hope. Perhaps not all at once, but little by little over time.

In the Book of Ruth, Naomi loses her husband and two sons over a span of about 10 years. As she returns home to live out the rest of her days, she has admittedly lost all hope. She vents to her daughters-in-law *“...for I am too old to have a husband. **If I should say I have hope, if I should have a husband tonight and should also bear sons, would you wait for them till they were grown?...”*** (Ruth 1:12, 13). Basically, if I even dare to say I have some hope, my situation is still hopeless. Backed into a dark place, it was understandably difficult to see a light at the end of the tunnel. Little did she know, that was all it was – a tunnel. The thing about tunnels is that there is always a light, always an exit. Tunnels are designed to go through something, usually by going underground. **Many of you think you are in a never-ending valley, when really, God is tunneling your way through.**

Perspective

The thing about hope is that it is all about perspective. How do you see your life turning out? Do you truly believe that where you are now is where you will be always? If you do, then you have lost the *perspective of hope*. Do not misunderstand, you can have faith, yet still lack hope. Faith is a trust and confidence in God. You can believe that He is God, He is real and He is all powerful; and yet lack the hope that He will use His power and will to change your circumstance. Hope is a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen, the grounds for believing that something good may happen. **Faith anchors you. Hope drives you.** Don't just be a Christian that exists. Be one that goes from glory to glory! It's time to get our hope back!

“Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord.” Psalm 31:24

Forget Not His Benefits

*Praise the Lord, my soul,
and forget not all his benefits—
³ who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,
⁴ who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion,
⁵ who satisfies your desires [hope] with good things
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.*

Psalm 103:2 - 5

When hired for a job, you sometimes get benefits. Perhaps the employer offers free or discounted insurance, retirement plans or stock options. The benefits are gifts or payments offered for being a part of their organization. Likewise, when you are in Christ, you get certain benefits as well. Not only are you saved from eternal damnation (which is enough by itself), God offers you additional benefits to help you here on earth. One of them I'd like to focus on is how He promises to redeem (compensate for or regain possession of) your life from the pit. This is a promise to pull you up from the hard times in life. One psalmist recalls how God brought him up *"out of the pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock and established my steps"* (Psalm 40:2). Realize you don't have to get out of this tough time on your own. **Hope in God and He will pull you out.** That alone should give you hope!

Don't let what you do not have, cannot see and *have no control over* take away from all the things that God has for you. It is time to remember His benefits, recite them, and declare them over your life so that your hope can thrive again! Below are just a few scriptures to get us started but I challenge you to add to this list and repeat them until you believe them. Before the year ends I pray that hope takes over your mind, heart and soul and propels your life further than you can imagine. In Jesus' Name, AMEN!

"Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from Him." Psalm 62:5

"Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God." Psalm 42:11

"No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame..." Psalm 25:3

*"But their eyes of the Lord are on those who fear Him, on those whose hope is in His unfailing love."
Psalm 33:18*

"Hope in the Lord and keep His way. He will exalt you to inherit the land; when the wicked are destroyed you will see it." Psalm 37:34